1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

LESU[1] is a village on the east coast of New Ireland about eighty miles from the northern end of the island. New Ireland is part of the Bismarck Archipelago and lies approximately between latitude 2° and 4° S. and longitude 150 and 153 E. It is in that part of the South Seas known ethnologically as Melanesia and is now under the political mandate of Australia. The island is long and narrow, about two hundred miles in length and an average width of twenty miles, except at its widest part in the extreme south, where it is approximately fifty miles across. It is divided into nine linguistic districts, in each one of which a different dialect is spoken. These dialects, while related, are not mutually intelligible. The linguistic unit in which I worked was comprised of five villages, Lesu, Ambwa, Langania, Libba, and Tandis, with a total population of about twelve hundred. It covered approximately twelve miles on the east coast north of the centre of New Ireland. I took up my residence in Lesu, which has a population of 232, and there did most of my work, although I visited other villages to attend various rites and secure ethnological information. Occasionally I went to a village in another linguistic district for some special ceremony, but such excursions were infrequent. I spent ten and a half months in Lesu, from March 1929 to February 1930.

When I first arrived, I found a partially completed and

[1] The spelling on Government maps and publications is Lossu. Lesu approximates more closely the phonetic pronunciation of the word by natives. New Ireland was formerly known as Neu Mecklenburg when it belonged to Germany.

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Lesu

Locality

New Ireland is divided into nine main linguistic units, which are further subdivided into smaller units based on differences in dialect. People who live twenty miles distant do not understand each other. There is no tribal, political, or other social relationship between these linguistic units. Even the villages of one linguistic section do not act as a unit. They have no common chief, and until recently, when it was prohibited by the white Government, there was fighting between the villages of the same linguistic unit. To-day there is jealousy and absence of any united feeling among them. It is merely a geographical area, separated from other areas by its language, but other than that it has no cohesion and does not even have a name. The village, with its distinct round of life, its chief, its important old men, its communal rites, its communally owned ground, its gossip and mass of trivial details which make up life, is the largest functioning unit based on locality. To-day, inter-village life within the same linguistic unit is confined mostly to important ritual occasions, when members of near-by villages congregate.

The village is subdivided into hamlets. Lesu, the village where I lived, has 232 inhabitants, and stretches along the coast for about three miles. It is divided into fifteen hamlets, separated from one another by fences and sometimes also by unused land. Each hamlet contains from two to eight houses. The larger hamlets have their men's house and cemetery, and every hamlet has its own communal cooking-ground and sometimes a cookhouse. The only orientation in the arrangement of houses is that the men's house and cemetery are near the sea. Each hamlet also has its name and a community life of its own, apart from its participation in the village life, and its members are frequently close relatives, but not always so. The women cook together and the men assist each other in their fishing and house-building.

3: Chinnery G, E-5 (1929) 1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

Scattered along the coast between the villages are the coco-nut plantations owned and worked by Europeans. They also appear in the list above-mentioned in capital letters. 361

During the German régime, efforts to enumerate the natives living between Kavieng and Madina were still being made in 1901-1902, and in that year the Government called a meeting of tribes, who two years before were hostile, and induced them to select chiefs to assist in local administration. Sub-districts were delineated and an enumeration was made, 5,118 people being recorded between Kavieng and Lugagun. This number did not include the forest and mountain people, as it was intended later on to amalgamate these with the coastal groups. In 1906-1907, however, the successful organization of unions between the two stocks appears to have taken place. What is meant by this is not quite clear, but, from what I gathered during the inquiry, most of the mountain people were induced to build temporary villages on the coast, and fusion between the stocks was encouraged in every possible way. Certain villages on the coast now belong to mountain people, who live in them for short intervals, and almost everywhere more or less fusion between the two stocks has taken place. 659 619 [161]

A great civilizing factor in those days was the coastal road, which in 1902-3 was extended to Fisoa, and in 1903-4 had reached Pinigindu. During 1911-12 no effort was spared to make it suitable for motor traffic. After military occupation in 1914 this road was extended to Kimaden, and during the present civil administration it has been carried on as far as Karu. Its existence has had a tremendous influence on the development of the people of the district, by whose labour, of course, it has been built and kept in repair. 491

The people of the area investigated are divided linguistically into three main groups, two coastal languages, one extending from Kavieng to Fatmilak, and one from Fatmilak to Karu, and bush languages which appear in purest form in the Limalaua group of people who live in the bush and on the coast near Fatmilak. According to information received from natives, the Kavieng-Fatmilak language is divided into the following dialectical groups:— 197

Kavieng to Losuk.
Mangai to Livitua.
Laowan to Luburua.
Lakurumau (said to be different from the others).
Munawai to Fatmilak.

The languages from Fatmilak to Karu are grouped as follow:— Limalaua (a bush language) is said to extend to Yendat and possibly to Lemo, Bimun, Panaras, Patlinger and other villages to the west.

3:Chinnery G, E-5 (1929)1931 OM10 New Ireland OM10

197 The next group (a coastal language) is spoken at Tandis, Limba, Lang-inia, Lassu, Amba.

Then the group spoken at Lemasong, Konnos and Konobin, which is said to extend to the West coast villages—Lamau, Lambak, &c.

The next group is said to extend from Pinigindu to Bulu, and through the Lelet plateau villages across to Mesi and other villages on the West coast, the dialects differing slightly.

Another dialect is found at Logon, and extends past Karu into the Namatanai district.

184 614 616 In the social organization there are two main divisions, which agree geographically with the coastal linguistic distribution. From Kavieng to Fatmilak the people are divided into multiple totemic clans with matrilineal descent; from Limalaua to Karu dual organization with the Eagle and the Hawk representing the totems of the clans. The Karu organization is slightly complicated, as will appear later.

614 In both divisions the clans are sub-divided into smaller groupings, each one of which is in some way associated with ancestral ghosts *masolei* or *maselei* (Kavieng to Fatmilak) *misili* (Limalaua to Karu).

The multiple clans represented in the social organization of the people living between Kavieng and Fatmilak are as follow:—

Clan (*erit bung* or *pambong*).	Totem (*mani* or *manu*).	——
A—Monga Kamade	Bungbunga (Hornbill) ..	Fatmilak
	Bangbanga	Luaupul
Moga Kamade	Babanga	Madina
	Bangabanga	Lakurumau
Mogon Kamari	Awoi-iang	Ngavelus
B—Monga Nuas	Balus (Blue Pigeon)	Fatmilak
Monga Nungas	Valus	Lugagun
Mogong Ge	Valus	Ngavelus
C—Monga Muna	Minungak (Eagle)	Fatmilak
	Manungak	Lauaupul
Moga	Munungak	Madina
D—Monga Soluba	Arigaum (Hawk)	Fatmilak
Mariba	.. ..	Kafkaf
Maiba	Regaum	Lakurumau
	Tegaum	Luburua
Miwa	Tegum	Lamekot
	Tekaum	Ngavelus
E—Monga Kala	Harok (red bird nest in ground)	Fatmilak
Kale	Karuk	Lauaupul
Moga Kela	Aiuk	Lakurumau
	Iok	Fongalava
Kala	A Kua	Lamekot
	Guok	Nonapai
Mogong Kali	Kuok	Ngavelus
	Gok	Livitua
F—Monga Tiring or Tiri-in au (Frigate bird)	.. ..	Fatmilak
Tirin	.. ..	Lugagun
Tivinguru ..	.. ..	Lakurumau
	Raula	Fongalava